

HIV/AIDS PROGRAMS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, yesterday on World AIDS Day, the administration announced its proposed 5-year strategy for the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, otherwise known as PEPFAR. The strategy is required by the Tom Lantos and Henry J. Hyde United States Global Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria Reauthorization Act of 2008. That is a mighty long name, but it does so much good. And it begins to shift PEPFAR from an emergency program to one focused on sustainability.

Mr. Speaker, the challenges in fighting HIV/AIDS are daunting, but not insurmountable. Over 33 million people worldwide are infected, an estimated 67 percent of whom live in Sub-Saharan Africa. Nearly 2.7 million people, including 430,000 children, were newly diagnosed with HIV last year. Over 14 million children have lost one or both parents to HIV/AIDS. AIDS is decimating an entire generation of the most productive members of society in developing countries, which will cause GDP to drop by more than 20 percent in the hardest-hit countries over the next decade.

Without effective prevention, treatment, and care efforts, the AIDS pandemic will continue to spread its mix of death, poverty, and despondency that is destabilizing governments and societies and undermining the security of entire regions.

But one need not travel to Africa or the Caribbean or Eastern Europe to witness the devastation of HIV/AIDS; we need only to look out the front door. In my home State of Florida, Mr. Speaker, an estimated 90,000 people are living with HIV/AIDS, making us third in the Nation in the number of AIDS cases.

My home county of Miami-Dade ranks second among large metropolitan areas for people living with AIDS with over 32,000 currently diagnosed. These individuals need our assistance. They are fighting this disease.

On October 21 of this year, with a bipartisan majority, we voted in Congress to reauthorize the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Treatment Extension Act. The Ryan White program has been the largest supplier of services for those living with HIV/AIDS in the United States. In the United States, over 500,000 people a year benefit from the Ryan White program. Florida alone received over \$209 million in funding with Ryan White funds in 2009, and has been able to assist countless low-income Americans living with HIV/AIDS.

Fully appreciative of the challenges here at home, I am proud to have supported PEPFAR since its inception. To date, it has proven to be a highly effective and results-oriented program. For example, more than half of the 4 million people receiving lifesaving drugs

in low- and middle-income countries around the world are directly supported through PEPFAR. PEPFAR has supported care for more than 10 million people affected by HIV/AIDS, including more than 10 million orphans and vulnerable children. At least 240,000 babies have been born free of HIV/AIDS thanks to PEPFAR prevention of mother-to-child transmissions.

The achievements of our bilateral programs are truly remarkable. However, the record of our multilateral organizations is problematic. While we need more robust burden sharing—particularly as the World Health Organization has revised its guidelines and vastly expanded the pool of people who require access to treatment—significant revelations of corruption in the global fund programs are cause for great concern.

Mr. Speaker, we must work together to ensure accountability, transparency, and maximum effectiveness of multilateral programs that are receiving United States support. We must work to ensure that every dime that is dedicated to PEPFAR, including our contributions to the global fund, is used for its intended purposes and delivered in the most effective, transparent, and sustainable manner possible. We must ensure that those precious resources actually reach those who are in need, without being diverted to line the pockets of unaccountable international bureaucrats or corrupt regimes.

Lastly, Mr. Speaker, we must also preserve the conscience clause and promote behavior modification, particularly abstinence and fidelity, under the new strategy.

In closing, let us recommit ourselves to saving the future by helping to save lives inflicted with HIV/AIDS.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. WOOLSEY addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

AMERICAN TROOPS IN AFGHANISTAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DOGGETT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, after the tragedy of 9/11, I voted for the resolution that authorized military action against those who attacked us, including sending our troops into Afghanistan. We sent a strong, unified message that we will never yield to terrorism. We have not just the right but the duty to keep America secure. I certainly agreed with taking out Osama bin Laden. It is outrageous that the Bush-Cheney-Rumsfeld administration failed to stop him, unnecessarily prolonged this conflict, strengthened our enemies as their attention and our resources

were diverted to an ideologically driven invasion of Iraq.

Surely all Americans should respond affirmatively to President Obama's call last night for unity of purpose in keeping our families secure and overcoming all of those who would do us harm. I agree with so very much of what President Obama said, but not so much with what and how he said he would accomplish our shared goal.

It is true he had no really good and easy alternatives, and I applaud his deliberative effort. But the path to peace and security will not be found through a wider war. It is wholly unrealistic to expect that we can escalate our military forces in the harsh, faraway landscape of Afghanistan by another 40 percent, then deescalate and begin bringing them home all within a mere 18 months.

We have been fighting in Afghanistan on the installment plan. A few more troops, a few more months, and a whole lot more money—billions. There is no way that 2011 will mark the end of this war or even the beginning of the end. This is just a mirage. In 18 months the reasons may vary, but the next installment will be requested in what is already a deteriorating war that has lasted 8 years with the illusive end of the war always just over the horizon.

The better exit strategy is to have fewer troops who need to exit. We should honor the sacrifice of those who are courageously serving and put fewer of them into harm's way. It should not take 100,000 highly equipped and trained American troops to defeat less than 100 al Qaeda in Afghanistan, an estimate yesterday from the President's National Security Adviser.

Once again, we hear talk of a grand coalition, but make no mistake, it is Americans who are being asked to bear the overwhelming share of the burden. As these troops would arrive in Afghanistan, the Canadians, the Dutch, they have already announced they will be bringing their troops home at the same time our people get there.

□ 1815

The French and the Germans have said not one more troop. Spain may increase its total to 1,200. Iceland has two, Luxembourg has nine. Every bit of help counts certainly, but it's clear that the great amount of blood that will be spilt will, once again, be American, and the cost will be to the American taxpayer.

Now, United States Army doctrine, as written by General Petraeus, calls for one counterinsurgent for every 50 members of the population. In Afghanistan, with a population of 30 million, that would work out to about half a million additional troops, not 30,000. Whatever the exact number is, it is clear that to meet the military's own objectives, more installments are in order. All this effort to prop up a corrupt Karzai government that just stole over 1 million votes to keep itself in power as it attempts to control a fraction of the country of Afghanistan.